

20-5
BRAHMARISHI NACHIKETAS

AN
UPANISHADIC STORY
CAST INTO THE FORM OF
TAMIL DRAMA
BY

V. S. MONEY IYER
(Krishnapuram)

ADAPTED AND PRESENTED
IN ENGLISH BY
K. N. SUBRAMANIAN
(Thapovanam)



6536
R65(௭௮௪)



Published by:
SRI VEMBAIYER SASWATHA
DHARMA SASANAM,
KRISHNAPURAM : : KADAYANALLUR.

Grams: "SPARKLERS"

TELEX : LION 0448 205

PHONE : 60 & 1205

Our humble pranams to 'BRAHMARISHIS'

THE NATIONAL FIREWORKS FACTORY

POST BOX No. 13

SIVAKASI. (S. INDIA)

(PIN 626 123)



6536
R65(வெந்து)

Manufacturers of
Famous "LION BRAND" Electric Sparklers
& All kinds of Fancy Fireworks, Electric
Crackers & Thukkada Crackers.

Grams: BLISS

TELEX: MA 294 RAJA IN

Phones : 2481, 2985

With Prayers to 'Brahmarishi Nachiketas'

RAJAPALAYAM MILLS LIMITED

Samusigapuram Road, Post Box No. 1,

RAJAPALAIYAM.

(PIN 626 117)



(A MODERN SPINNING MILLS WITH 36,044 SPINDLES)



Manufacturers of

COMBED, CARDED, SINGLE & DOUBLE YARN
IN HANKS AND CONES

Counts: 20s to 100s

STAPLE FIBRE YARN IN HANKS AND CONES

Counts: 30s to 40s



Founder: SRI P. A. C. RAMASAMY RAJA

Chairman: SRI P. R. RAMASUBRAHMANEYA RAJHA, B. Sc.,

20-5

BRAHMARISHI NACHIKETAS

AN
UPANISHADIC STORY
CAST INTO THE FORM OF
TAMIL DRAMA

BY
V. S. MANI IYER (Krishnapuram)
ADAPTED AND PRESENTED
IN ENGLISH BY
K. N. SUBRAMANIAN



WITH A PREFACE BY
JUSTICE P. RAMAKRISHNAN, I. C. S. (Retd.)



NOT FOR SALE



SRI C. VEMBAIYER

FOUNDER:

**Sri Vembaiyer Saswatha Dharma Sasanam
Krishnapuram, Kadayanallur**

PREFACE

In a well-known metaphor introducing the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads are compared to a milch-cow, Lord Krishna to a cowherd, drawing the milk (of Brahma Vidya-Knowledge of Brahman) for the benefit of cultivated minds for all time, and Arjuna to the calf. To carry the metaphor further, on careful study, the cream of the milk, would appear to have been derived from the Katopanishad. Many of the crucial ideas in the Gita about knowledge of the Brahman and the discipline needed to obtain it, are found in the Katopanishad. In fact, many verses have been transplanted almost *verbatim* to the Gita from the above Upanishad, in a manner not found in the case of any other Upanishad.

Adi Sankara in his famous introduction to the Bhagavad Gita, has summarised its teaching of the goal of life and the way to reach the goal. The goal of life is *Sreyas* or liberation from the chain of births through the realisation of Brahman, and the way is total renunciation of *Preyas* or the fruits of motivated action namely, wealth and prosperity in this world and beyond. This is also the instruction of Yama, the teacher to Nachiketas the pupil in Katopanishad (I. 2. Verse 1) "Sreyas and Preyas are distinct from each other and lead to entirely different objectives. One who has adopted the goal of Sreyas attains the highest state, but one who adopts Preyas perishes".

"The way to obtain Sreyas is straight and sharp as a razor's edge" (Katopanishad I. 3-14). This description so fascinated the English writer Somerset Maugham that he gave the title 'Razor's edge' to one of his celebrated works.

This is the verse:-

“Arise, Awake, enlighten yourselves by resorting to the great (teachers)! The sages say that the way is difficult to traverse, being sharp as a razor's edge.”
(I, 3-14)

One may note also that the first line of this famous verse, impressed Swami Vivekananda as a proper invocation to aspiring mankind. It is the basis for the motto found in the first page of many of the publications of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission which he founded. “Arise, Awake, Stop not till the goal is reached”

Nachiketas Upakhyana, its dramatic quality

Upakhyana means an episode or a story. Such episodes are found in many places in the Upanishads and the Puranas. Those in the Upanishads have a moral or philosophical idea to convey, like the story of Jabali's son Sathyakama. Often, their dramatic content is very little. However the Nachiketa Upakhyana, which occupies practically the first half of the Katopanishad (One Valli out of two Vallis) is unique both for its high philosophical content, as well as for the elements which lend themselves readily to dramatisation. As a consequence of an irate father's rash command, a tender lad is made to face unflinchingly Yama the dreaded Lord of Death. Untold riches, power, and position, when offered by Yama, fail to tempt him, and he would be satisfied only by the teaching of the Highest Wisdom, which is thereafter given to him by Yama. The *locale* for the teaching is also dramatic. It is in the dark region beyond death, of which Yama is the overlord, and which people dread most.

Shri V. S. Mani Iyer, dramatised this episode in Tamil, and this work has received favourable response from the public. There are excellent reviews from the Press (vide The Hindu dated 3-5-1977). Shri K. N. Subramanian, a devout student of our ancient scriptures, and an inmate of the Tapovana Ashram of Swami Shri Gnanananda Giri has rendered this work into English, adding touches of his own, which have embellished the work.

The part of Gotama, the father of Nachiketas.

Gotama Rishi - it is well known - is shown in the Upanishad, as one whose anger was roused when his son Nachiketas asked him repeatedly at the conclusion of a sacrifice, as to why lean and famished cattle were given as gifts to Brahmins, and pertly asked, to whom Gotama proposed to give him as gift! Gotama then told Nachiketas that he would be offered to Mrityu or the Lord of Death. The dramatist in Act I Scene IV, has taken the liberty to show in a soliloquy, Gotama Rishi as one who in his heart of hearts had realised that his young son had reached a high level of spiritual evolution by his sadhana or spiritual practice, that what he needed thereafter, was a teacher of the Highest Wisdom to complete his knowledge. Gotama chose the Lord of Death Yama, deliberately for this purpose. Gotama also says "If I impart the knowledge to him, the other disciples will think I am partial. So a way out must be found, and this is the way that Siva has shown. May the benign God fulfil the wish of this child through Yama!" The result of the spiritual practices of Nachiketas is made apparent with telling effect, in Act I Scene IV, when Nachiketas sits down and meditates on the highest of the Mantras, Gayatri, and his form rises up, floats and disappears in the sky. The souls of the dead who have

- IV -

to return to the earth have to take the path presided over by the deities of Smoke, Darkness and Dakshinayan (Vide Bhagavad Gita Chapter VIII Verse 25). Nachiketas with his living body takes the same path, to the amazement of the dwellers in that dark region, where hell or naraka is situated. But he crosses over to an effulgent region studded by constellations, where the mansion of Yama is located.

Other instances compared.

In Greek mythology Orpheus, an unparalleled master of music became desolate on the death of Eurydice, his wife. He travelled to Hades and by the power of his music persuaded Pluto, the king of Hades to send back Eurydice. In our Puranas - as pointed out in the prelude to our drama by the Sutradhari- Savitri and Markandeya confronted Yama in the terrain of the earth, winning him over, the one, by the power of Pativratya Dharma - unflinching devotion to one's husband - and the other, by faith and prayer offered to Siva as Mahakaleswara, the Supreme Master whom Yama as Kala has to obey. But Nachiketas confronts Yama in his own terrain, in the world beyond-beards the lion in his own den, as the saying goes - and puts Yama in a dilemma by the compelling need to adhere to Dharma, to grant him his wish to know the secret of Brahma Vidya or Supreme Knowledge. This secret, Nachiketas learns, not only for himself but for the benefit of earnest seekers among mankind for all time. The dramatist portrays this by adding a concluding scene in the hermitage of Swami Gnanananda, Act V Scene V. where the contribution of Nachiketas is extolled by the great sage, who declares that Nachiketas would be known henceforth as Brahma Rishi.

A contrast can be drawn here between the Hindu approach and Greek approach to an episode of mythologic content. Nachiketas goes to the Higher Worlds and brings back the torch of Spiritual Knowledge to illuminate dark souls, and the effort is blessed by the higher sages and the Gods. On the other hand, in Greek mythology when mankind was shivering in the cold, Prometheus had to go heaven to steal fire for their benefit, but he was made to suffer for his humanitarian effort by the irate Gods who inflicted on him eternal punishment. This led to a saying "As fleas are to wanton boys, so are we to the Gods! They kill us for their sport!"

The deities of the Hindu pantheon however are subservient to the Supreme Iswara; they never violate Dharma.

The qualifications of Nachiketas to obtain the Highest Knowledge from Yama:

In the Upanishad text, Yama is away when Nachiketas reaches his abode. Nachiketas had to wait for three days before Yama returns. Yama besides being Lord of Death, is also Dharmaraja the dispenser of dharma or Righteousness. He is one of the higher deities who can confer boons. The Hindu in his daily *sandhya* devotion invokes his blessings in the prayer beginning 'Yamaya Dharmarajaya, Mrithyuvecha anthakayacha'. When Kunti the mother of Pandavas, begets a child through prayer to Yama, the child Yudhishtra was also known as Dharmaraja, and by his life and example, set the standard of righteous conduct, as expounded in the Mahabharata. Yama was embarrassed because he had transgressed the rule of righteous conduct towards guests, and for making amends he had to

- VI -

grant three boons to Nachiketas. It is well known how the first boon covered the pacifying of the irate father Gotama, the second boon conveyed the secret of Nachiketa Agni-a technique for havan or sacrifice in the fire, but the third boon, was given only after Yama was satisfied that Nachiketas by his spiritual evolution, was qualified to receive the highest knowledge, which was the content of the third boon sought by Nachiketas.

In various scenes in Act I, the dramatist has cashed in heavily on the waiting period in Yama's antechamber, and realised rich dividends by way of dramatic situations so created as to capture the imagination vividly. Yama's wife (she is not supplied with a name) with her lady attendants named as Sujata, Suguna and Sushmita regale Nachiketas with food and drink and music but he is shown sitting unmoved in deep meditation. This is the opportunity to give scenic touches with women participating, to captivate the audience with music and perhaps dances.

The back-ground of three boons granted by Yama is so drawn as to show clearly the spiritual equipment needed for a seeker to acquire knowledge of Brahman. In the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord while expounding the highest Knowledge, in more than one place, has stressed the qualifications required for the Yoga-Arurukshu - the seeker on the path, and has given a description of the state of the Yoga-Aruda-one who has reached the end of the path and attained the goal. But the Lord does not test Arjuna's competence to receive the highest Knowledge. The immediate occasion in the Gita was to overcome Arjuna's diffidence and make him fight and destroy the evil kings who had become a burden to the Earth. "After considering all this teaching, make your choice" says the Lord to Arjuna

(Gita Chapter XVIII V 63). But the position of Nachiketas was unequivocal. In seeking the World of Death he had left the World of Pleasures behind him, and he would be satisfied with the highest Knowledge and that alone. He had already acquired Gnana and Vairagya. What he needed was a teacher, who according to his father Sage Gotama's decision, was to be the Lord of Death or Yama himself. Knowing the subtlety of this knowledge, and the need for ripeness on the part of the disciple to receive it, Yama had to put Nachiketas through severe tests, *viva voce*. He praises Nachiketas, when he comes through them successfully. This is graphically demonstrated in the scenes covering the waiting for Yama in the ante-chamber. On his arrival, Yama tells Nachiketas - "Beautiful women, chariots, musicians, of unparalleled excellence, I offer thee O Nachiketas! Refrain from asking me about the secret of Death (and immortality)" Nachiketas replied:- (I.1-25)

"O Lord of Death, all these gifts you offer are ephemeral; they depend on the senses, whose activity dies out. Human life itself (which looks to the enjoyment) is pitifully short. The chariots, dances (of women) and music, keep them yourself! They are not for me!" (I.1-26)

"By obtaining this Highest knowledge and the Yoga or discipline necessary to obtain it, Nachiketas realised Brahman, and became liberated. Others who follow this teaching will also be benefitted in the same way." (II.3.18)

The Vision of Hell and its punishments:

In the Mahabharatha after the last journey Mahaprasthan, Yudhishtra enters the World of Yama, led by Yama himself (in the form of a dog), and is taken through naraka or hell. There, on seeing the sufferings of his kith

and kin, he refuses to leave the place, and wants to share their sufferings. Yama is pleased with this final sacrifice of his son and leads him to Heaven. The Upanishad does not make any reference to this part of Yama's world. The spiritual evolution of Nachiketas had been so complete and perfect, that there was no need to confront him with the experience of Yudhishtra in hell. But in the drama, the period of waiting spent by Nachiketas in deep meditation in the antechamber of Yama, is used to show how the near presence of a great soul, will itself automatically relieve the sufferings of the less fortunate around him. In the last scene, hell itself is shown as transformed into a garden full of trees and flowers, thanks to the visit of Nachiketas to Yama's world. One recalls the famous verse in Viveka Chudamani:-

“The great and peaceful ones live regenerating the world like the coming of spring, and after having themselves crossed the ocean of embodied existence, help those who try to do the same thing, without personal motives.” The hell attendants complain to Yama that the presence of Nachiketas, has relieved the inmates of hell of all pain. Their cries are no more heard and the blows of the attendants of hell, are of no more avail !

The philosophical teaching about the content of the Supreme Knowledge or Brahma Vidya.

The gist of this teaching found in the Upanishad is given in clear and appropriate terms, in the various scenes depicted in Act III. The English language cannot convey adequately the rhythm and flow of the Sanskrit in the original, but the author has taken trouble to convey the meaning of the teaching as faithfully and accurately as possible in English prose. Each verse in the original is a “gem of the purest ray serene.” Like a visitor in the cave

of Alladdin, every gem is found to be so wonderful, that it is difficult to choose even a few of them for reproduction. However I was interested to find out how the author has rendered in English the meaning of one of the most oft-quoted verses in this Upanishad. (I. 2. 23) It is also given in Mundaka Upanishad (III. 2.3)

"The Self is not attained by either great learning or discussion. For a mind that is externalised has not received the grace of God. Only he whose mind is inwardised by the grace of God gets the knowledge of the Supreme!" Commentators in the context of this verse, have stressed the aspect of grace. "The Upanishadic statement of Self, revelation of the Atman is spiritually identical with the idea of Divine grace upheld by religions centred in a personal God". (Swami Ranganadhananda- "Message of the Upanishads"-p. 390).

The author has attempted to give a gist of the whole teaching in the concluding scene, using the intervention of Sage Gnanananda Giri, to whom Nachiketas is made to give the following summary of the teaching:-

"The inner essence of the human soul is consciousness which is pure and all-pervading. This can be realised by knowing it to be one's Self and as ever-existing. This is eternal and unchanging. It has to be known by restraining the talking faculty in the mind, by restraining the mind in the self (ego), by restraining the self in the unmanifest, and by negating the unmanifest, in the Supreme. There is nothing else to be known. That is the Beyond. This cannot be realised, unless instructed by a preceptor who has known the Truth not as other than the Self.

This Truth is not to be known through the intellect nor by learning nor by expositions. He only who cleaves to it with his heart shall know it. Knowing it one transcends all the sorrows of life and gains Eternal Beatitude."

(Act V Scene V)

Summing up this preface, I am happy to pay my tribute, to the writer of the dramatised version in Tamil of this great Upakhyana, Sri. V. S. Mani Iyer, and the translator (with adaptations) into English, Sri. K. N. Subramanian. The reading public who have no access to the original Sanskrit will be greatly benefitted by their valuable effort.

MADRAS,

3—5—1981. }

P. RAMAKRISHNAN.



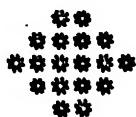


H. H. Sri Gnananandagiri Swamigal of Thapovanam
blessing the author Sri V. S. Money Iyer

FOREWORD

With a view to popularise the teachings of the Hindu Sages in the Upanishads Sri V. S. Mani Iyer (Krishnapuram) conceived a novel idea and presented them in the form of Tamil Dramas. The intended purpose seems to have been served as there is demand now for such presentation in English. The play in Tamil originally written by Sri. V. S. Mani Iyer in regard to the Katopanishad has been modified and re-presented in English with his approval under the title "Brahmarishi Nachiketas". It is hoped that the limited purpose of such literary experiments to acquaint the readers with the Upanishadic teachings in broad outline will be equally achieved by this adaptation in English. The portion of the story which is to be actually found in the said Upanishad has been indicated in Section I of the Notes appended at the end. I am sincerely thankful to Sri P. Ramakrishnan, I. C. S. (Retd. Justice) for having furnished a scholarly Preface to the Drama.

K. N. SUBRAMANIAN



"THE HINDU" 3rd May 1977 Tuesday

SANSKRIT-TAMIL

UPANISHAD NAATAKAMAALA (Katopanishad): By V. S. Mani Iyer, (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-600004. Rs. 2).

The celebrated Katopanishad belongs to the Krishna Yajurveda and derives its name from the fact that it is associated with the Kata Saaka (Branch) of that Veda. The principal episode of Nachiketas is a part of the Taittiriya Braahmana. There are two chapters in this Upanishad divided into 6 parts called 'Vallis'. As is generally known here, Yama (Death) discourses on the problem of "after-death" to the young boy, Nachiketas. This setting gives a human touch and a feeling of pathos to a philosophical exposition. The Bhagavad-Gita incorporates many passages from this discourse.

The book under review presents the Upanishadic ideas in the form of a drama in 5 Acts, the scenes of the first and the last Acts being laid in this world, the rest taking place in Yama's World.

The author has followed the tradition of Sanskrit plays, and the phraseology is sastraic. He has also introduced new minor characters and scenes, to add to the interest drawing upon Vishnupuraana, Srimad Bhagavatam, Bhagavad-Gita. The words of Kulasekhara Aazhvaar, Aandal, Kampan and Kural are nicely interwoven besides the Upanishad-mantras. The exposition is lucid and follows the Sankara-Bashya. There are also scenes suggestive of Dharmaputra's descent into hell, affording relief to the sufferer there and the Rishis' appreciation of Lava-Kusa's recital of the Ramayana. This play will delight philosophers and laity alike. Of course, this is not meant for the ill-equipped general reader, as is made clear in the closing scene of the play itself.

. S. N. SRIRAMADESIKAN

DRAMATIS

PERSONAE

<i>Yama</i>	— The Lord of Death; Chief of Yamaloka; Other name Mrityu.
<i>Gotama</i>	— A sage; descendant of another Gotama and Uddalaka; Father of Nachiketas.
<i>Gnanananda</i>	— The sage of another Ashram near that of Gotama's.
<i>Nachiketas</i>	— Son of Gotama
<i>Vasumati</i>	— Wife of the sage Gotama and mother of Nachiketas
<i>Chitragupta</i>	— Yama's Chief Minister
<i>Agnivesa,</i> } <i>Satyashada</i> }	— Disciples of Gotama and companions of Nachiketas.
<i>Pasahasta,</i> } <i>Sonithaksha,</i> } <i>Vajradanta</i> }	— Attendants in Yama's Mansion
<i>Susmita,</i> } <i>Suguna,</i> } <i>Sujata</i> }	— Maids in Yama's Mansion
<i>Sutradari</i>	— Director of the drama who introduces the play to the audience.
<i>Sirendri</i>	— Maid assistant of Sutradari.
<i>Ananta Veerya,</i> } <i>Gowri Sankar,</i> } <i>Padmapada</i> }	— Brahmanas

*Ascetics, Brahmanas, Brahmacharis, Sravanas, Hell Superintendent,
Hell Attendants and others.*



PROLOGUE

Gnanananda: (turning to disciples) Nachiketas has learnt from Yama the Brahma-Vidya and the Yoga to be pursued for Realisation of Brahman. He himself symbolises extreme dispassion. The message of Nachiketas has therefore a triple value for the seekers of liberation. May His example and His excellent exposition of the Truth inspire and guide you! Rise up, be alert, and attaining the wise ones realise the Supreme.

[Act V Sc. V]



Sage Gnanananda remains seated on a platform. After remaining absorbed for a while he turns towards the disciples and addresses them.....

(ACT I — SCENE V)

0

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

ACT I

SCENE I

Benediction

(From beside the screen)

OM PURNAMADAH PURNAMIDAM PURNAT
PURNAMUDACHYATE – PURNASYA PURNAMADAYA
PURNAMEVA AVASISHYATE. OM SANTI SANTI SANTI

(Enter the stage from the opposite directions
Sutradari and his maid assistant Sirendri)

Sirendri : Salutation to you Master! With what
do we entertain this learned audience
today?

Sutradari : (to Sirendri) Salutation.....Is there still
a doubt? We propose to enact the
Encounter of Nachiketas with Yama,
the Lord of Death. Why,.....Why do
you feel disappointed?

Sirendri : (With a derisive smile) What is there
for us to feel enthusiastic about this
unheard of encounter?.....Our audience
has already witnessed the awful encounter
of Markandeya with the Lord of Death
.....It has also seen how Satyavan's wife
tactfully got back her husband's life from
the Lord of Death and obtained many
precious boons as well I doubt
Master, whether the encounter you speak
of will be interesting.

Sutradari : Doubt not, fair lady, it will be interes-
ting. This encounter of Nachiketas with
the Lord of Death....the strangest of
all such encounters.....will be instructive
as well. Markandeya attained eternal

physical existence and Satyavan's wife only fulfilled her earthly aspirations. Here is Nachiketas, a lad on a mission of securing the knowledge of the Secret of Eternal Life from the Lord of Death himself.....not for his sake but for the entire humanity.

Sirendri : Is it so? You really whet my curiosity lookthe learned audience also seems to be all eager to watch such an encounter.

(Both bow to the audience and leave the stage)

ACT I

—

SCENE II

(On the bank of the Ganga, on the slopes of the Himalayas there is the Hermitage of the Sage Gotama. The tall trees have spread a vast green canopy above. There is uninterrupted chatter of birds and the air is full of the sweet smell of flowers. Serene peace reigns in the atmosphere and a solemn-looking lad is seen not far from the hermitage in a reflective mood)

Nachiketas : (in soliloquy), This magnificent universe which the Stream of Time reveals and withdraws successively... ..is it a freakish bubble coming from nowhere or a projection of an invisible something? Are life and death disconnected events appearing in an artificial sequence or are they but manifestations of a deeper

principle? such are the questions which my mind constantly raises up. Sleep and dream cast but a thin veil over them but do not provide the clue. But this ceaseless enquiry leads me not anywhere. The duties I perform are only in the seeming. The pleasures of life do not charm me. In no time wonderful colours in endless forms glitter in the sky during sunset but as quickly they disappear. Life with all the hard looking reals seems to be but another castle in the air thrown up by a weak mind for a moment's delight. Ah! why then should I ceaselessly reflect upon it as if it has a meaning and a value? Or do I keep pondering about them urged by that very principle which is invisible? (Impatiently) How then may I get to know the Truth, the Mystery? Repeatedly I have sought to put these questions to the Kulapati, but my venerable father evades me in a shrewd manner. And he must have a reason for it! Then Oh Truth! You are my refuge, my sole refuge! I seek thee and may thy light lead me to thee.

(Slowly walks towards the hermitage)

ACT I

SCENE III

(The Hermitage of Gotama..... near the entrance
is seen Kulapati Gotama)

Gotama : Agnivesa.....Oh Agnivesa!

Satyashada : Here I am, venerable Sage. Agnivesa
is presently engaged in finalising the
preparations for the Yaga.

Gotama : All right. (Showing a cow limping
towards the ashram) Lead this lame
cow slowly to the Gosala. See how its
eyes plead for instant protection.

Satyashada : Venerable Master, you are the friend of
the mute cows. All the cows of the woods
that have become old and decrepit
instinctively wend towards thy abode.....

Gotama : Yes, Satyashada. Ferocious animals and
hunters will not spare the lives of
these poor cows.....

Satyashada : But, venerable Sire, there is already a
large number of such cows Gosala
has not much space left.

Gotama : Then, we shall extend the Gosala to the
very bank of the Ganga. Our heart is as
vast as the earth.

Satyashada : True, venerable Sage, we have often
heard from thy lips, "showing friendliness
to all beings makes one a Brahmana.....
Maitro Brahmana Ucchyate"

Gotama : Yes! Thou hast understood well.

(Gotama leaves for bath in the Ganga.....Agnivesa
enters)

Satyashada : Agnivesa, (showing the cow) here is a new visitor to the ashram!

Agnivesa : Good. Not a day passes when Gotama's compassion for the helpless creatures does not manifest itself.

Satyashada : But the poor cows cause us a great anxiety. They do not eat or drink however much we provide them.

Agnivesa : Rightly they do so. They are doing penance along with the Sage Gotama. Having attained the lease of life by the mercy of the sage, they want to spend it in mortification and austerities to obtain better future lives.

ACT I

—

SCENE IV

(In the Yagasala inside the hermitage of Gotama. The tongues of flame in golden hue leap upto a great height with every sumptuous offering of ghee to the God of Fire. Disciples surrounding the Holy Fire place dry faggots in the Fire, bring other offerings for the God of Fire and also arrange near the sage Gotama costly jewels, vessels and clothes to be presented to the worthy Brahmanas, in this Yaga called Viswajit in which all the belongings of the performer must be gifted away.)

Gotama : Oh learned Brahmanas! This yaga performed for the welfare of humanity has just concluded by the grace of the Yagnapathy, the Lord of Yagas. The

presence of the Brahmanas, great in the wealth of learning and austerities, in such vast number, indicates that this yaga has the blessings of the great Gods. May it please the benevolent Gods to inspire us all with noble ideals and energise us to do noble deeds! As the concluding act, Oh great Brahmanas, I propose to present all the things that are in my possession. It is really the Lord, who possesses everything – the giver, the gift and the receiver. Who are we to call anything as ours? But the great conventions of the ancient ones need to be honoured. Kindly accept the small gifts of mine and be pleased to pronounce auspicious blessings.

Brahmanas : Oh distinguished Sage! The great sages do anything only for the sake of the welfare of the world. (Lokasangraha). This Viswajit Yaga has been performed by you with great diligence in a flawless manner. We are pleased to see the great sincerity which your disciples, especially your son Nachiketas, evince in the proper conduct of this. Anything that we accept from you is a treasure. It is the heart of the giver, not the gift that counts.

Gotama : Be it so.

Vasumati : We by ourselves can do little. It is the great God who internally inspires and externally manifests as sacrifice and fruits

of sacrifices. We earn the grace of God only through the blessings of great Brahmanas like you.

Brahmanas : Thou speakest aptly as behoves the wife of Gotama.

Gotama : Oh Ananta Veerya, be pleased to accept all these horses gifted to me by the King of Anga Desa in the Asvamedha sacrifice.

Ananta : Be it so. May thy son bring glory to thy family!

Gotama : Oh Gowri Sankar, here are the fine silks and woollen garments brought by me from Kashmir. Do thou accept them from me.

Gowri Sankar : Be it so. May your son earn undying fame as the knower of the mystery of life.

Gotama : Oh learned Padmapada, accept these pearls got from the Pandyan Kingdom.

Padmapada : Be it so. Let there be none in your family who does not know the great truth of life.

(after making some more presents)

Gotama : We have given away all that are in our possession. (turning towards disciples) Is it not so?

Disciples : Not yet, Master. The cows in the gosala remain to be gifted away. Some wealth

for their upkeep is also kept ready to be given along with the cows.

Gotama : Truly. Bring them at once.

(Old and decrepit cows are brought to the Yagasala)

Brahmanā I : These old lame decrepit cows can serve no human use. What for the Sage has been maintaining them?

Brahmana II : See how they look tenderly at the Sage.

Brahmana III : They seem to know that they are going to part with the company of the Sage!

Nachiketas : (in soliloquy) Kulapati is gifting the cows which have outlived their utility. The purpose behind making gifts is not served if such gifts are made. This will vitiate the otherwise good result of the Yaga. Let me do something to nullify the wrong. I shall offer myself for being gifted away. (addressing the Kulapati) Dear Father, to whom do you gift me? (As Kulapati does not take note of the request, he again addresses the father) Venerable Father, to whom do you propose to gift me?

Vasumati : Nachiketas, do not interrupt your father.

Nachiketas : (Again) To whom do you gift me, Father?

Gotama : (Irritatedly) To Mrityu, the Lord of Death, I gift thee.

Vasumati : Oh, No, No, Venerable Sage! do not get angry. He is only a child.....

Brahmana I : Oh Sage, don't be angry. Please withdraw the gift.

Brahmana II : What a frightful outcome for an innocent interruption!

Brahmana III : What a strange turn!

Gotama : (calmly) Whatever happens is the will of God. We are but helpless dolls which move the way they are caused to move. Let us pray and everything will be all right. (to himself) This perhaps is the way Siva has answered my prayer. Nachiketas is too earnest for his age. His restless mind wants to probe into the secret of life. If I impart to him the knowledge, the other disciples will think that I am partial. So a way out must be found and this is the way Siva has shown. May the benign God fulfil the wish of this child through Yamal

(As all look with awe and wonder, Nachiketas goes round the Sage Gotama and his wife three times, does obeisance to them and thereafter to the other sages, goes to a corner, sits in meditation of his chosen deity Gayatri and recites the mantra. Instantly his form rises up in the sky and disappears in yonder space. Vasumati falls into a swoon and the other rishis become speechless.)

ACT I

SCENE V

(Not far from the hermitage of Gotama, there is the ashram of Gnanananda under the shades of a mango grove. The disciples of the Sage in the course of performing their routine work are seen engaged in conversation. The Sage who moves about unobtrusively lingers behind a wall near the disciples unseen)

Disciple I : Of what avail his wisdom? Nachiketas ought not to have given any cause for the provocation of the Kulapati.

Disciple II : What a great promise and what a steep fall? If only he had not been impudent, he would have won great renown as a Sage! How learned is he!

Disciple III : Had I been in his position.....

Disciple I : No. Don't proceed. I can tell, You would proclaim yourself as the son and disciple of the great Gotama ...

Disciple II : And get some people to write and sing about you.....

Disciple III : Yes, Surely. See the Acharya Kanada and Guru Ahola who move about with great pomp among the people. What if there is one more?

Disciple I : Why only one more? There will be no dearth for such false teachers as long as there are people who could be fooled.....

Disciple II : I am pained to hear such words. What great ideals our sages stand for? Let us not tarnish their images by.....

(The Ashram bell rings. The disciples leave the spot at once, perform Sandya and after the dusk gather at the front yard. Sage Gnanananda remains seated on a platform. After remaining absorbed for a while he turns towards the disciples and addresses them)

Gnanananda : Beloved disciples, the all knowing Gotama has just completed his Viswajit Yaga. The Sage is great in his learning and greater still in penance. He is all compassion for the people. Men have lost the faith in the Cosmic Law, the Dharma. People have forsaken the traditions of the forefathers in all spheres. The spiritual traditions are neither understood by the people nor adhered to. False preachers exploit the ignorance of the people and pass as great path-finders. The situation calls for instant redress. Whoever cheats will finally find that others have not been so much cheated as he himself has been. For the restoration of this Dharma in the people's life great Gotama has performed this sacrifice. A noble act like this can have only a noble outcome. The celestial designs execute themselves through human agents. It is for divine purpose, Nachiketas has left for the Mrityu's abode. The mission

of Gotama is the mission of all the Sages. What a noble ideal our sages held before us! And what a great fulfilment is vouchsafed to us?... Would we not cease to talk about the unseen Truth in any manner we choose for petty fame! Would we not form a true respect for the sages and the traditions left behind them and walk in their path in simple trust and without pride and ostentation? Would we be false to the truth that is within and without and deny to us the blessings of inner peace and external concord? These thoughts deserve to be pondered over by you. May the sages bless us all with discernment! Om.

(The disciples reverentially bow to Gnanananda and silently disperse).

ACT II

SCENE I

(Nachiketas is speedily passing through the space like a bird gliding through the sky)

Sutradari : Fair Lady! Do thou see Nachiketas coursing through the clouds with great determination even as an arrow shot by a skilled archer is speeding towards the target!

Sirendri : True, with what majesty does he travel!

Sutradari : Look, Siddhas, Vidyadharas, Charanas with their loving maidens throng the path to greet him.

- Sirendri* : Yes, I notice. They also want to serve delicious fruits and drinks to him.....
- Sutradari* : But he does not respond to their entreaties to rest for a while.
- Sirendri* : Why?
- Sutradari* : His solemn purpose does not permit diversion.
- Sirendri* : What path, Master, does he take? There is utter darkness as if the sun is eternally eclipsed!
- Sutradari* : He is going through the Dark Path to the Abode of Yama as he is to return therefrom. Those who go through the Effulgent Path do not return.
- Sirendri* : Here, see, on eastern side of his path trees with leaves sharp as knives..... and you also hear pitiful cries from somewhere!
- Sutradari* : Ah! Have you become frightened? Nachiketas is travelling through the Hell. This is the region known as the 'Wood of the Leaves of Knives'. The cries are from those who have stolen innocent people's property and are undergoing punishment in that wood.
- Sirendri* : Nachiketas has crossed it in an instant. Look! What is this lake looking red?
- Sutradari* : This is 'The Lake of Blood' which those who have done physical injury

to animals must swim through. But see, everywhere Nachiketas moves like a Hamsa untouched by anything.

Sirendri : How can anyone save oneself from this foul river of blood?

Sutradari : Well. Those who have made gifts of cows in the earth are safely led by the spirits of those very cows beyond this lake called 'Vaitharani'.

Sirendri : What are those luminous bodies which Nachiketas respectfully bows to?

Sutradari : They are the constellations Pushya and Sravana which are worthy of worship.

Sirendri : The space is studded with stars and Nachiketas swiftly moving through them appears like a child scattering sparkling jewels all over.

Sutradari : Ah, look, Nachiketas has now arrived at the city of Yama.

Sirendri : What beautiful mansions! What sweet smells the wind carries! The wind is soft on the skin and there is pleasing music too.

Sutradari : Yama is no crude monster but the God of Justice, fair lady! So his Abode is in an enchanting environment.

Sirendri : What is this mansion before which Nachiketas is alighting?

Sutradari : Without doubt, fair lady, this is the Mansion of Yama, the Benevolent.

ACT II

SCENE II

(The Abode of Yama. Nachiketas is wonderstruck for a moment at the spectacle of the delightful appearance of the mansion surrounded by small ponds, plants and creepers with fragrant flowers.)

Nachiketas : (soliloquy) The blessings of my father and the grace of Gayatri have safely brought me to the Abode of Yama. It has been, as it were, a small leap for me. But this is no matter for me to become satisfied with. My ordeal has just begun. I am to meet the Lord, the very mention of whose name sends a tremor through the frames of even enlightened mortals. What to speak of ordinary men? Oh Supreme Truth! Thou hast manifested as the universe and as every being in it. I seek refuge in thee! May Yama show unto me the compassion as that of a Preceptor!

(Yama's attendants with iron clubs walk towards Nachiketas)

Vajradanta : Who is this lad shining in great lustre?

Sonithaksha : I am also surprised. Who indeed is this mortal and how has he come alive?

Pasahasta : What a sad reflection on the performance of duty of the Lord Yama's attendants! A mortal is seen alive at the very abode of the Lord Yama. This news will upset the worldly order and people of the

earth will scarcely be afraid of either the lord Yama or his attendants. (gesticulating the club) Quick, it is action that delights us, not speech. To allow him even to appear before the Lord Yama is an assault on our calibre.

(walks threateningly towards Nachiketas)

Vajradanta : Oh fool! Who are you to act on your own? We shall report his arrival to the minister, and await his instructions. Don't do him any harm. I shall presently go to the minister.

(Vajradanta hurries to the mansion nearby and returns with the minister Chitragupta)

Nachiketas : (Aside) Adorable Gayatri! Thou indeed illuminest the intellects of all beings and cause them to function! I seek thy guidance. I have not come to the Abode of Yama only to court death. Save me from every danger, as a mother would protect her child!

Chitragupta : Swagatham Nachiketas! Hearty welcome to thee.

Nachiketas : (Aside) How does he know my name? What strange things do happen? (To Chitragupta) Salutations to you, Oh Master. I am Sage Gotama's son sent...

Chitragupta : (Hastily) Do not trouble yourself to tell. I know.....

Nachiketas : (Devoutly) How?

Chitrugupta : Young Nachiketas! You are speaking to Chitrugupta. Nothing can happen in the earth anywhere to which Chitrugupta is not a witness.

Nachiketas : Then you know about Gotama's Yaga...

Chitrugupta : I know everything, Nachiketas. I am sorry.....this interlude has delayed the rendering of the customary honour that is shown to a worthy Brahmana.

(leads Nachiketas to the ante-chamber of Yama's Mansion. Yama's wife immediately receives the guest and gives water to wash his feet and hands. Chitrugupta offers a seat to Nachiketas)

Chitrugupta : Kindly be seated Nachiketas! You have come from afar and must be feeling tired. Refresh yourself with fruits and drinks.....

Nachiketas : I am anxious to meet the Lord.....

Chitrugupta : Surely you can meet him. The Lord has left urgently for the Abode of Sun. The Lord of Death, as you know, has ever to be performing duty. So rest here until he arrives. I will instruct the attendants to look after your welfare. With your permission, Nachiketas, I shall go to my place to resume my duty. The denizens of the earth are never so kind as to give me a moment's leave from my work even to spend with a visitor!

Nachiketas : (rising from the seat) If it be so Master, let me not cause any delay.

Chitragupta : There is everything here, Nachiketas, to make you comfortable.

(Chitragupta leaves)

Nachiketas : (soliloquy) Now indeed, I realise how wrong I was in causing the provocation to my father? What did my Father intend when he gifted me to Mrityu, the Lord of Death? Am I here as a victim or as a guest? The attendants, the minister and the Lord Yama seem to be always busy with their job. Is my own life at peril in their hands? What has Chitragupta's account to reveal about me? Is this welcome done to me only a trap?

(Yama's wife with women attendants enter with several plates of dishes and fruits and drinks).

Yama's wife : Honoured guest! Never have I seen a day as auspicious as this one. To see a learned Brahmana from the earth alive in our abode is an occurrence that has not happened before. We are highly blessed by your visit. Kindly accept our hospitality. These several dishes and drinks will remove the fatigue of your travel instantly. These ladies will be ever here to serve you. Be at rest here until my Lord arrives... Let me not any longer disturb you...

(To the lady attendants) Fair ones!
This guest of ours is worthy of your
kindest attention. Be mindful of your
duty. My Lord will not condone any
negligence in your service.

(Yama's wife leaves.)

Sujata : Oh great guest! Here are tasty dishes
which no mortal might have ever seen.
Please have them.

Suguna : Here are fruits and drinks which
celestials themselves long to take.

Susmita : I am spreading a beautiful couch here,
Oh, honoured guest, for you to rest
awhile after taking your food.

Sujata : (to companions) Our honoured guest
must have also an opportunity to see
the celestial dance and hear the celestial
music. Let us provide these after our
guest has rested for a while.

(The lady attendants withdraw and remain at a
distance)

Nachiketas : (in soliloquy) The Quest for Eternal Life
has led me into the Domain of Death.
Having witnessed in the Hell the gruesome
acts of torture and suffering only a few
hours before on my way, my senses
have now the sweetest celestial pleasures
to feast upon. Death and life, so different
in kind, are so near each other! Are

they bound with one another? Or is there a Life Beyond? Everything is too strange to be true. Oh mind! Be on guard. Do not allow the senses to be dragged away by these delights! Do not leap to Death but spend the time praying to Gayatri for Light.

ACT II

SCENE III

(The Abode of Yama.....Nachiketas is sitting erect with eyes closed.)

Sujata : The young lad is in deep meditation. He is not aware of the long time that has passed since his arrival!

Suguna : He has not taken any dish or drink since his arrival!

Susmita : I find him very solemn and grave. What purpose has brought him here?

Suguna : Is anyone's anger responsible for his coming to the Abode of Yama?

Susmita : Or is he here perhaps to seek special boon from our Lord?

Sujata : Whatever be the reason for his visit, he ought to be treated with great consideration.

Susmita : We must make him eat food, Otherwise..

Suguna : We receive instant punishment from the Lord!

Susmita : Has he fallen into sleep because of fatigue of travel? What shall we do to quietly awaken him?

Sujata : He looks too serious!

Suguna : What a plight we are caught in?

Susmita : If the guest is not properly fed, our Lord may be angry with us. If he is roused from the meditation, he may become angry with us.

Suguna : I shall suggest a way out.

Susmita : Be extremely cautious. If the Brahmana lad becomes angry with us, we will not be here.

Suguna : Let us create such conditions in which he himself wakes up from his meditation. Then, at once, we shall, as if in a humble way, approach him, feed him and keep him in good mirth.....

Susmita : Dear lady, wish is not fulfilment! Try as you may.

(Sweet scents are sprinkled all around..... In melodious voice songs issue forth from one after another.....Neither perfumes nor melodies draw out the mind of Nachiketas who remains totally absorbed in contemplation)

ACT II

SCENE IV

(A portion of the Hell called the Dark Pit.....
The Hell Superintendent arrives)

Chief

Attendants : Salutations, Master.

Hell

Superintendent: What has happened in the Dark Pit?
I do not hear the loud wailings of
the sinners!

Attendants I

& II : Yes, Master, It is so for sometime past.
We are ourselves wondering why it is so?

Hell

Superintendent: You perhaps are slack in your duty.
Ask the other attendants to beat the
sinners ceaselessly with the iron clubs.

All Attendants: We have been ceaselessly doing it,
Master, but the sinners don't cry aloud.

Hell

Superintendent: If so, beat with bigger clubs.

All Attendants: Are you punishing us or the sinners
Master? Our hands have become swollen
because of beatings! Take pity on us
Master. It is not we but they who
have sinned.

(Pasahasta is being led into the Dark Pit by a
Messenger of Chitragupta. The Messenger hands
over a chit to the Superintendent and leaves)

Superintendent: What? What has happened, Pasahasta? The Minister has sent you to the Dark Pit.

Pasahasta : What is the use of my lamentation? Ever since the arrival of the puny mortal in this kingdom, everything has become topsyturvy!

Superintendent: Pasahasta, I am not sending you to the Pit at once. Please tell me everything you know. I also see strange things!

Pasahasta : Tell me Master, who has seen a mortal visiting the Abode of Yama in flesh and blood? I felt this was an affront to the sovereignty of our Lord. When I sighted a lad from the earth near the Abode of the Lord, I walked towards him to strike him down with my club. See the windfall that has happened to that foreigner from the earth! He is in the royal mansion! The son of the soil has now to languish here in the Dark Pit!

Hell

Superintendent: Please be more specific, Pasahasta.

Pasahasta : What more shameful thing can happen in the Yama's kingdom? A visitor from the earth has been received with the highest honours in the Abode of the Lord. Susmita, Suguna and Sujata whom we do not have even a chance to see are serving him always!

Hell

Superintendent: That is doubtlessly strange! What exactly is the visitor doing?

Pasahasta : They say he is sitting in meditation awaiting the arrival of our Lord from the world of Sun and these damsels are singing for him in sweet voices!

Hell

Superintendent: Pasahasta, there can be no further delay. (Turning to the attendant) Push him into the Pit. (in soliloquy) Now I am beginning to understand the things. The strange happenings in the Hell have something to do with this lad in deep meditation! The company of a blessed soul is an antidote to sufferings, say the elders. Let me probe into the matter further.

ACT II

SCENE V

(Abode of Yama. The vehicle carrying Yama descends at the portico. Chitragupta goes near the vehicle and receives Yama. Other attendants are at a distance.)

Chitragupta : Salutations, Master.

Attendants : Hail! Hail! The Lord of Justice!

Yama : Minister, Is everything all right in our Kingdom?

Chitrugupta : Everything is not completely all right, Lord. But there is nothing to cause us concern.

Yama : The affairs of the Kingdom demand immediate attention. Please give us all the details.

(Yama walks along with Chitrugupta towards the entrance of the Mansion.)

Chitrugupta : (Reading from a sheaf of papers) Nachiketas, the son of the Sage Gotama arrived from the earth three days before at the Abode of the Lord. He was received immediately and led to the ante-chamber of the Lord's Mansion. Ever since arrival, he is sitting in meditation and the attendants have not succeeded in their attempt to rouse him and make him take food. The latest report from the several branches of Hell is that despite beating the sinners do not make loud laments.

(Yama's wife and ladies come with arati and offer welcome to Yama.)

Yama : (to Chitrugupta) Resume your duty, Minister. We will attend to the guest. Shortly we will be coming to the Court of Justice.

Chitrugupta : Yes, My Lord.

(Chitrugupta leaves. Yama enters the ante-chamber of the Mansion.)

Yama : Nachiketas, Welcome to thee.

Nachiketas : (rising from the seat) Salutations, Lord.
I am the son of the Sage Gotama
and have come.....

Yama : We know. The minister has informed
us. Nachiketas! We hear that ever
since your arrival you have not taken
any food. A Brahmana guest remaining
without food brings about loss of the
wealth and the glory of the host.
May such misfortunes not befall us!
Accept our salutations. Be pleased to
come with us to take food.

(Yama and Nachiketas enter into the Dining Hall
and after sometime enter the Entertainment Hall
followed by damsels)

Yama : Be seated in this couch, Nachiketas.
Your travel from the earth coupled with
the fasting for the three days must have
caused you much fatigue. (Turning to
Susmita) Provide us some entertainment,
fair lady. Our guest from the earth
has not witnessed the celestial dances.
Suguna and Sujata are here to provide
accompaniments!

Susmita : (Bowing to Yama and Nachiketas)
Surely Lord. I am ready to carry out
thy instructions.

(Dance commences with accompaniments.)

Nachiketas : (In soliloquy) My main aim is still to be accomplished! I cannot afford to displease Yama and go out of this Hall. Oh Divine Spirit, you indeed are the Artist doing the cosmic dance assuming endless number of forms! You indeed are the Divine Song that is sung in the form of various melodies! In this dance and this song of the celestials may I see thy own form and hear thy own tune! He indeed is brave who is composed even when is exposed to the most sensuous delights!

(Dance concludes after sometime)

Yama : Susmita, Now we have witnessed a dance of yours in which both exceeding charm and exquisite art have matched each other as rhyme and sense in a good song. Our visitor must have highly enjoyed it!

Nachiketas : (aside) If he has a mind for it!

Yama : (to Susmita) Susmita, we will have more of this dance later, in honour of our guest. (To Nachiketas) You know, dear Nachiketas, Yama has duty round the clock. Presently, we have to attend the Court of Justice. You may come with us if you wish.

(Yama and Nachiketas leave. Scene changes. Yama followed by Nachiketas and Chitragupta enter the Court of Justice. Attendants with iron clubs

line on both sides of the entrance. Yama stands near his seat on the pedestal in prayer for a few seconds and occupies the seat. Nachiketas bows to Yama and Yama requests him to occupy the seat on the left side of the floor. Chitrugupta bows to Yama and occupies seat on the right side of the floor.)

Yama : Chitrugupta!

Chitrugupta : My Lord!

Yama : We want to spend sometime with our noble guest alone. So we will attend to only important cases now. Are there any requiring immediate attention?

Chitrugupta : (looking into the Account Book) If my Lord permits the most important ones will be presented.

Yama : You may do so.

(A man in ochre robes is led into the Court)

Yama : What a sacrilege you are committing Chitrugupta! You are bringing a Paramahansa in a dishonourable manner!

Chitrugupta : No Lord, He has only changed his white robes in favour of red!

Yama : What are you saying?

Chitrugupta : My Lord, This man has collected a vast wealth by the easiest profession...

Yama : He might have made an invention by chance!

Chitragupta : No Lord, He has posed as a Guru and exploited the ignorance of people in many clever ways.

Yama : What does he say?

Man in

Ochre robes : People venerated me and prostrated before me. Because they made me a Guru, I had to conduct myself like one!

Chitragupta : (turning to the Man in ochre robes) Why did you revile at Vedas?

Man in

Ochre robes : I did so because other Gurus did the same!

Yama : Have some innocent people followed him?

Chitragupta : No Lord, people who made money by the most unethical means are amongst his followers.

Yama : (hesitating to make up the mind) What is the next case?

(A stout man is led into the Court.)

Chitragupta : He is the Trustee of a religious institution who has misused its resources against its intents and purposes.

Yama : The next one.....

(Another man is led into the Court.)

Chitragupta : He is the Reformer who criticised the rituals and the idol-worship.

Nachiketas : (Aside) All these look unusual! These people have not done great wrongs. Good people too while engaged in a task are apt to do some wrong things. It is not fair to.....

Yama : (to Nachiketas) You seem to have some thoughts, Nachiketas. You may share them with us. Please come near.

(Nachiketas goes near Yama, speaks a few words in his ear and resumes his seat.)

Yama : Chitragupta, though it is our wont to pass orders in all cases presented to us at once, we reserve our orders in these cases in deference to the wishes of Nachiketas. Words of the wise, even if they are young, must be respected. Let these persons be brought before us during the next sitting. We attend to our guest now.

(The Court rises. Yama followed by Nachiketas leaves the Court.)



ACT III

SCENE I

(In the Mansion, Yama and Nachiketas remain seated facing each other. Two Sravanas remain standing with folded hands.)

Sravanas

I & II : Om Sahana vavatu, Sahanau bunaktu,
Saha veeryam Karavavahai. Tejasvina-
Vadhithamastu ma vidh vishavahai
Om Santi Santi Santi.

Yama : Beloved Nachiketas! You have been without food for three nights in our home. If only to offset this unintended discourtesy, we propose to give you three boons. You may ask them one after another.

Nachiketas : Oh Master! There is no fault on your part as you had gone out. However your generosity in granting me boons is laudable. May my father's anger towards me totally disappear and may he be delighted to see me when I return with thy permission.....this is the first boon I beg to seek.

Yama : Your father will be, as before, doubtlessly happy to see you on return from the Domain of Death and will spend happy nights thereafter. We have granted the first boon.

Nachiketas : Celestial beings live in blissful way for they know not fear nor old age. They

have transcended grief as they have neither thirst nor hunger.

Yama : Certainly, it is so.

Nachiketas : That worship of fire, Oh Master, which thou knowst as the means for the attainment of that Heavenly Abode, do thou, out of grace, impart to me. For I am earnest to know this means of attaining immortal life.

Yama : We shall tell thee the secret of Worship of Fire which is known to the minds of the wise. Do thou listen with attention this secret, which is the means for the Life Eternal in the infinite celestial world. (after uttering some words secretly in the ear of Nachiketas) I have told you now the ritual, the number of times it has to be performed and how the fire is drawn out. Having heard these from me now, Nachiketas, do thou repeat what you have understood.

Nachiketas : (After speaking some words in the ear of Yama) Thus have I understood what you have taught me, great Preceptor!

Yama : We are extremely impressed Nachiketas. You have correctly understood and repeated. We are so glad that we want to give you another boon. This worship of Fire we have taught shall be ever

known after your name. It will be called as Nachiketagni in the world. And also receive this garland of jewels in different hues!

Nachiketas : Thou art too kind to this humble lad.
I repeatedly salute thee, my Preceptor!

Yama : Whoever learns, recites and performs this Nachiketagni three times duly groomed by mother, father and preceptor goes beyond life and death. He knows the Overlord of the world who is worthy of worship and attains his state. Bereft of all sorrows, he abides happily in the celestial world. Thus have I granted thy second boon—the path to heavenly life. Do thou ask the third boon! (Aside) By luck, this lad's first and second boons relate to the realm of name and form only. Let him not demand of me anything greater!

Nachiketas : There is in the world of men,
Oh Master, a great debate,
Whether the soul lives on after man's
death or lives not,
Taught by you, I shall attain this rare
wisdom
This is the third and last boon I ask
of thee.

Yama : (Aside) Ah! What I expected not has
happened!
But does he deserve to receive the
Self-knowledge?

(to Nachiketas)

That is a subject which intrigues even
the celestials,

Who do not know yet, being a too
subtle truth,

Do not place me under obligation,
Oh Nachiketas!

Seek some other boon instead as you
please.

Nachiketas : Gracious Master, the truth that is sought,
Even by the celestials and not known yet,
There is none but thee who can impart
And no other boon is equal unto this.

Yama : Sons and grandsons alive upto hundred
years,
Cows, Horses and elephants with gold,
A vast earth and a life as long as you wish
Do thou ask for as boon, dear Nachiketas
Wealth and long life and this vast earth
And whatever else equal to these
Do thou ask for and you become at once
Endowed with all these highest pleasures.

Nachiketas : (Aside) What is the Lord's purpose,
Oh my God!
In describing all the pleasures which
I desire not
This perhaps is a test to see whether
Nachiketas is after these lesser delights!

Yama : Whatever pleasures not known in earth
All these and more, ask as you please
Here are the beauties not seen in earth

With their chariots and accompaniments
Ordered by me, they will serve you well
Do not Nachiketas, ask to know about
Death.

Nachiketas : What are these delights offered by thee
That last not beyond a single day
And do they drain away all the energy
All these and more are but a trifle
And so my master, let these chariots
and all
The music and dancing be ever thine own.

Yama : (Aside) What then indeed is his quest
for?

Nachiketas : That secret of Eternal life, do thou tell,
Which is beyond the ken of men,
This is the Wisdom I seek as boon
Naught else in this world Nachiketas
seeks.

ACT III

—

SCENE II

(Inside the Mansion. Yama and Nachiketas remain seated facing each other. Two Sravanas remain standing there with folded hands.)

Yama : (Aside) Nachiketas is worthy of
receiving the secret of Self knowledge!
May the Vedic Seers bless him with
fulfilment! (to Nachiketas) Beloved
Disciple, There are two things called
Sreyas and Preyas. Sreyas stands for
the ultimate good. Preyas gives immediate

pleasure. Both these giving rise to different results drag the human soul in different directions. The one who pursues the path of immediate pleasure denies himself the ultimate good.

Sravana I : So the pursuit of Sreyas and Preyas is what constitutes bondage for the human soul.

Yama : Rightly so.

Sravana I : If the Preyas is not conducive to the ultimate good why does man long for it?

Yama : The wise ones correctly understand the nature of Sreyas and Preyas and choose to pursue the Sreyas. The dullards out of desire for material wealth and prosperity long for the Preyas.

Nachiketas : What a sad thing to do!

Yama : Oh Nachiketas! Thou need not be afraid. Though we offered many pleasures and arranged for music and dance only to lure thee, thou very thoughtfully refused them in a firm manner. Thou hast escaped getting sunk in the mires of pleasures and wealth wherein wallow many deluded souls.

Nachiketas : By the Grace of Vedic Seers, Master!

Yama : That which is known as Vidya and that which is known as Avidya are far from each other and are utterly contrary in nature. Oh Nachiketas! Thou art a seeker of Vidya. That is why the pleasures could not lure thee.

Sravana I : (Aside) It is a deserving compliment to Nachiketas!

Yama : And this Avidya is a wonderful power! Those who are under its sway imagine themselves to be too wise and knowledgeable and walk into the trap of disease and destruction like the blind led by the blind.

Nachiketas : What is the future course of their life, Oh Master!

Yama : These indiscriminating men who know not of a higher world delude themselves into believing that this world is everything and such men, possessed by the greed for wealth repeatedly come to this region of Death.

Sravana I : (Aside) Persons like Nachiketas must be rare!

Yama : For many do not have the opportunity even to hear about Atman! Having heard about Atman, many do not understand Him. A preceptor is a wonder and even so a shrewd disciple

who has understood! For to know the Truth is a wonderful phenomenon and to be able to imbibe it is a delicate art.

Nachiketas : Why should it be so, great preceptor?

Yama : Well, We explain. Materialists (Charvakas) do not have an opportunity to hear about Atman, even so it is for those who believe in the performance of sacrifices as the means for enjoyment of celestial pleasures. Even those seekers of liberation, who hear about Atman do not perfectly understand It.

Nachiketas : Even after hearing about It, why should the aspirants not understand It?

Yama : The gods to whom the offerings made in the Holy Fire are the food, do not like the mortals coming to know the Truth. Hence they put obstacles in the paths of the seekers!

Sravana II : Of what kind?

Yama : The gods sow disharmony between the preceptor and the disciple! Either the preceptor is not able to expound the Truth through the fault of understanding or speech or the disciple suffers from distrust in the preceptor or faulty reasoning.

Sravana II : How are these to be overcome?

Yama : Surely by Iswara's grace only. Hence it is that the disciple chants the mantras that contain prayer for this harmony. Iswara, propitiated by the prayer, grants the harmony! A wise preceptor and a loving disciple are rarely to be found!

Sravana I : Why need it be so?

Yama : Listen! Preceptor is of two kinds. He who knows the scripture and its meaning is of one kind. He is only a man in as much the sense of individuality is not dead in him. When instructed by him, doubts will not vanish as the Truth is far beyond speech! If the other one who abides in the experience of Brahman instructs, the disciple gets the Awakening! This preceptor belongs to the second kind. Wisdom destroys false reasonings. So a good preceptor is one who is rich in both the understanding of the Scripture and the experience of the Truth. It is the instruction of such a Preceptor and not logic that gives rise to the Awakening. And the Eternal Good is not also attained through the means of transient Karmas.

Nachiketas : Is there any special discipline which the disciple has to follow to realise the Truth?

Yama : Yes, Undoubtedly. The disciple should not be externally inclined. Only by

practising Adhyatma Yoga, he can have the vision of the Supreme which is otherwise very difficult to get.

Nachiketas : Why is it so?

Yama : The Truth is so subtle and remains hidden beneath the five dark sheaths. Only the intellect interiorised through Yoga can destroy the darkness. By knowing thus, one abandons elation and grief and experiences the bliss of Self.

Nachiketas : Very difficult, then!

Yama : Do not be afraid Nachiketas! The doors of the Mansion of Liberation are ever open to you.

Nachiketas : If I am, Oh preceptor, capable of knowing the Truth, do thou then tell me That which is beyond the World? Do thou tell me That which is beyond the Right and Wrong, the Cause and Effect, the Present and Future?

Yama : Do thou carefully listen, Nachiketas
That which is sought to be explained
by the Vedas,
That for attaining which penances
are performed,
That for realising which Brahmacharya
is pursued
That is OM, known as Pranava, my dear,
Knowing this, a man attains whatever
he wishes!

Contemplation with Pranava as support takes one to Brahmaloaka. But knowledge of this same Pranava leads one to Liberation. The Consciousness signified by the word 'Pranava' is not born nor it ever dies.

He is the most ancient and the ever new; He is unborn and eternal. He is neither the cause nor the effect. Even if the body is dead he is not dead. It is one's body that kills another body and is killed. Consciousness neither kills nor is killed. He is smaller than the atom and vaster than the space. Only he who is without desires and whose senses are serene can see this Self seated in the Heart. The senses are serene only if the mind is pure. Who else but I can know that Supreme Truth? Because the mind that is externally inclined cannot realise the Truth which is innermost.

Sravaṇa II : The nature of the Truth is so strange!

Yama : Yes. It is so. While seated here, he goes far. While he is lying down, he is pervading everywhere. The man is sitting in the wood for meditation but his mind assumes a body and goes to the city where it buys and sells. Such is the contradictory nature of His attributes!

Sravana I : What then is His real nature?

Yama : That is to be known only by turning the mind within. He is without body but abides in these ephemeral bodies; He is all pervasive and is the substrate of the universe. Knowing Him, one does not grieve.

Sravana II : Will not learning help one to know It easily?

Yama : No. The Self is not attained by either great learning or discussion. For a mind that is externalised has not received the grace of God! Only he whose mind gets inwardised by the Grace of God gets the knowledge of the Supreme. Again only he who has discarded unwise conduct and is of composed mind can know the Self. Who can know the Transcendent Principle which absorbs into Itself the whole along with *Mrityu*, except by a method, except by a discipline?



ACT III

SCENE III

(Vasantha Mandapam. Yama and Nachiketas arrive in a chariot drawn by five horses. On arrival at the Mandapam, they are received by Sravanas and led into it)

Nachiketas : Great Preceptor, I have deeply reflected upon the truths imparted by you. I have still some doubts.....

Yama : Do thou, ask, Nachiketas. We will explain everything in a convincing manner.

Nachiketas : Who is the knower and who is the known, do thou tell in distinct terms, Oh kind preceptor!

Yama : Beloved Nachiketas! It is an important question. Do thou listen carefully. The Consciousness that enters into the individual soul assumes two forms like light and shadow. One that is of Jiva, the knower and the other that is of Iswara, the Knowable. That which remains conditioned by the intellect is Jiva and that which remains unconditioned is Iswara. They are like the occupant of the chariot and the place to be reached by him through the chariot. Know that Jiva to be the occupant of the chariot and the body to be chariot. It is Ahankara the conditioning adjunct

of the Jiva, that is the Sarathi (Driver) of the chariot. The mind is the reins and the five sense organs are the horses and the objects of enjoyment are the places of earth covered by the chariot. The attainment or non-attainment of the desired place by the occupant of the chariot is dependent on the sarathi. May the seeker of liberation direct the horses of the sense-organs through mind in a proper way and by the path of inwardisation of the mind reach the abode of Vishnu. The Inner Path begins with the sense organs and ends with the Abode of Vishnu.

Sravana I : The comparison of chariot to the Jiva is very apt!

Yama : Yes. ^{or} Here more about it. The sense organs are the products of the five elements. In relation to the organs the elements are subtler and higher. In relation to the elements, the mind formed out of the subtler elements is higher and inner. The doership is still subtler than the mind. The collective doership (Cosmic ego) is subtler than the individual doership. The still subtler unmanifest is known as Maya and the substrate of this is the Purusha, the Supreme Principle. There is nothing beyond Purusha as everything is pervaded by Purusha only.

The enquiry into the nature of reality consummates with the understanding of this Supreme Principle. It is the farthest point to be reached by the chariot progressively.

Nachiketas : Like the occupant of the chariot, is the Jiva also confined to the body?

Yama : The true nature of the occupant of the chariot of body is all-pervasiveness. It is ignorance of his all pervasive nature that has confined him to the body. When he realises the all pervasive nature of the Being, he does not think of himself any longer as an individual.

Atman really exists in all the bodies. Due to the delusion, people are not aware of It. It must be perceived through a sharp intellect. The sharpness of intellect is acquired through the practice of Yoga.

Nachiketas : Gracious Preceptor, Do thou instruct me in detail about this practice of Yoga.

Yama : Nachiketas, You have rightly asked to know about the practice of Yoga. Listen attentively. The Yoga has four planes. They are the planes of Speech, Intellect, Doership and Collective Ego. By restraining the external senses and the faculties including speech, ensure

the existence of the mind only. By restraining the mind, let there subsist the 'doer'. By restraining the doer, (ego) let there be mere 'I' sense (Cosmic ego); By the restraint of even that 'I' sense, the pure blissful Self spontaneously manifests Itself.

The practice of the Yoga is like walking on the edge of razor for the unintelligent. Great skill is required on the part of the Yogis who pursue this Yoga. He must overcome sleep and distractions and contemplate steadily on the Supreme Self.

Sravaṇa II : Why is not the Self perceived ordinarily?

Yama : The Self is devoid of the attributes of form and sound. So it is perceived only by a very subtle mind. For, more an object is characterised by attributes grosser it is. As the Self is absolutely devoid of attributes, it can be perceived only by a very subtle intellect.

ACT III

SCENE IV

(Mansion of Yama. Yama, Nachiketas and Sravanas are together.)

Nachiketas : (After prostrating to Yama) Great Preceptor! Do thou kindly repeat thy teachings in greater detail, so that I can perfectly understand them.

Yama

: Well. We presently explain them more clearly. Do thou know, Nachiketas the impediments to the attainment of the Knowledge. The Lord created the senses in such a manner that they always divert the mind only towards the external things. Hence it is that none of them ever perceives the Inner Self. But this is so only in the case of the mind tainted by desire. The mind that is rid of desire is a pure mind. Such a mind through the proper method of Yoga can perceive the Self. When there is knowledge of the external form or when there is experience of dream; let an attempt be made to understand what exactly it is. All that exists including the inert matter is only Brahman, is only Consciousness. That which is beyond the Vedas and that which is beyond the Right and Wrong, sought to be known by you is this Brahman only.

Sravana II

: How is the Jiva to be distinguished from Brahman?

Yama

: He who enjoys the fruits of karmas done in the past is called as Jiva who is sustained by the Prana. When through discrimination he is separated from the conditioning adjunct and understood as Iswara, the individual soul no longer entertains aversion.

Birth in a human womb is what is hated and this does not exist for the Iswara. When He is Himself the Creator of the world, how can there be birth for Him? That all pervasive Principle which exists in all the bodies is what is spoken of in the Vedas. That Jiva indeed leaps from death to death who sees the multiplicity! The Iswara and the individual soul are really non-different from each other and only through a sharp mind, their true nature can be perceived. The individual soul is seated in the heart and remains circumscribed by the intellect and is of the size of a thumb. But when the conditioning factor is removed, he realises himself to be the all pervasive Ruler of the present and future worlds. The waters that descend on the mountain through rains get scattered and reach low depths in diverse ways. He who perceives the difference between Iswara and Jiva is born and reborn in the mean wombs. The water that descends into the well of pure water becomes itself pure and sweet. Even so the individual soul who knows the all-pervasive blissful Self itself becomes the very blissful Spirit.

Sravana I : Is that the liberation from bondage?

Yama : Yes. This body is like unto a city of eleven gates, including the ones at the

nave and the crest of head. By knowing the indwelling Ruler of this city, the already released soul gets finally released! The knowledge of Truth instantly releases the soul from the bondage of ignorance, desire and deed. With the death of body there is the second and final release called Videhamukti as there is no more birth for him.

Sravana I : Thus there are two phases in liberation—one that follows the Understanding of Truth and the other that arises on the death of body.

Yama : It is prana that is responsible for the functioning of the senses. And this prana also is an instrument in the hands of another agent. The senses and the prana are tools like spade in the hands of a woodcutter. So, to say that the soul lives because of Prana and Apana is not true. What sustains the soul is that Principle which is the support of even that Prana! He is the real agent and by virtue of past deeds he betakes a higher or lower birth. Higher and lower birth are like palaces and cottages and are dependant on the nature of past karma only. When all the senses are inactive during sleep, he creates things after things in the dream world. Who can therefore refuse the existence of a Principle other than the body?

Sravana 1 : For that would amount to a denial of the self!

Yama : Rightly so. It is necessary to ascertain the existence of soul which is other than the body and know it to be Brahman which is the substrate of the Universe. Even as one Fire enters into pieces of wood and manifests in different forms, the single Self enters into bodies and is spoken of as different souls. Vayu (air), though one enters into the body as Prana and manifests in different forms. Even so the Self is spoken of as varying from adjunct to adjunct! Though the Sun is perceived through the eyes, the Sun remains unaffected by the blemishes of the eyes. So even if the Self is associated with different adjuncts it remains unaffected by their miseries. The Self is the inner-most Principle of all the existent things. Though he is independent, he remains veiled by Maya. That single Self assumes many forms as a single actor plays many roles. Iswara who is conditioned by Maya dispenses fruits according to their actions, for the sake of enjoyment, of the souls who remain conditioned by the intellects.



ACT III

—

SCENE V

(As in the preceding scene)

Yama : Shall we sum up the teachings so far
imparted to you?

Nachiketas : Certainly, Great preceptor! The subtle
truths need to be reiterated to be
perfectly understood.

Yama : Those fortunate souls who perceive
the Witness of their intellects, they
transcend sorrows for all time. They
enjoy Brahmic Bliss always.

This bliss which cannot be directly
indicated through speech is ever
immediate and self-illuminating! Neither
the sun nor the intellect can
illumine what is ever self-illuminating.
Illumined by that effulgent Principle,
the sun, moon etc., illuminate other
objects. That Supreme Principle is the
root of this Tree of Life which has its
root above and the branches below. The
branches represent samsara. That which is
the root is a self-illuminating Principle. That
is the Immortal Spirit. In that abide
all the worlds and that is never
transcended by any. In unison with
the Maya the Supreme Principle rules
the world.

Sun, Wind, etc., out of fear for its function in their respective spheres.

If before death overtakes the body, an individual soul does not realise this Principle, it will be more difficult for him to realise it in subsequent lives. As in the dream-world, there is no freedom for such a spiritual pursuit in the Pitru-loka (world of the ancestors). In the world of celestials the lure of sense enjoyments never allows the mind to be single pointed. In the Brahmaloka, one can attain the Realisation but that world is not easily attained. Only in the world of mortals one can see the Self in the intellect when the latter is rendered as pure as that of a mirror.

The senses are not the Self inasmuch as their transience is experienced. Knowing it to be so, one can easily ascertain their witnessing Principle and realise It as Brahman. One not so intelligent can progressively discriminate the senses, the intellect, the doer, the collective ego, and the unmanifest and perceive the Supreme Self through the sharpened intellect.

The Self does not exist in the objects perceived by the senses. Only when senses withdrawn from the objects are restrained in the mind, when the subtle

mind is also restrained that is, when both the senses and their agent, get completely restrained, the state of Yoga is attained.

Even though the Self is not known by any of the senses, the Knower of Truth affirms Its existence. For if the cause is non-existence, the world which is the effect must also be mere non-existence.

So you must realise the Truth as ever-existing Self. How can you deny its existence when it inheres in everything?

You must initially recognise its existence, in its condition of association with the adjuncts; after knowing its existence, you must discard the adjuncts and see it in its true nature.

These adjuncts are the products of Maya and so imagined ones; by discarding these, the Pure Principle in unassociated condition must be realised.

In the muddy ^{dd} water throw the Kathaka seed. You will find that the water becomes purified and the mud gets removed.

The knowledge of the conditioned Supreme likewise paves way for the knowledge of the unconditioned

Supreme. As the kathaka seed removes the impure dirt, Yoga cleanses the mind of the impure desires.

When all the desires abiding in the heart get dispelled then only the individual soul abandoning mortality, attains the state of Brahman. When the Consciousness transforms, as if, into ego, it is like a knot. Then it begins to desire. These desires abide in the heart. The man who realises the Self through discrimination cuts asunder the knot. When this false identity between the Self and ego is dispelled through knowledge, let the semblances of desires persist in the heart. They cannot harm the individual for they will get destroyed in due course.

The one liberated in life has eschewed all desires and so knows no death. It is the uprising of Prana that is called death and this uprising does not exist for a realised soul. The pranas dissolve within and disappear even as the water thrown on a hot iron plate instantly disappears.

The Seer is even before death Brahman only and on the dissolution of the body only seemingly attains that Brahmic state.

If one cannot know Brahman, let atleast one pursue worship of it. By travelling through the nadi that reaches the crest of head, the worshipper attains the Brahmaloka and gains Realisation there.

If the worshipper's mind has the requisite purity, he discriminates the Self here itself from the body and realises the Self as Brahman.

One must draw out the Self from the body dexterously even as one draws out the the core substance (ishika) of the Munja grass.

Rise up, be alert and by seeking the wise ones, realise the Supreme.

Whoever knows these truths taught by us to you will attain Realisation and Immortality.

Nachiketas : (after rendering obeisance to Yama)

OM Sahana vavatu...

Om Santi Santi Santi

(Screen Drops)



ACT IV

SCENE I

(In the Court of Justice Lord Yama and Chitrugupta are seen in their seats and Nachiketas is seen in the seat occupied by him on the earlier occasion)

Yama : Chitrugupta, we have given the deepest consideration to the cases presented before us during the last sitting. It is reprehensible that the symbol of the highest wisdom, the truest renunciation and the most self-less love, which the ochre robe is, should suffer gross misuse. This symbol was associated with the great seers and sages of the past and nothing should be done to deprive it of the enormous significance which it once had. These truths have to be brought home to the man in the ochre robes. As for the trustee who misused the resources of a spiritual institution against its intents and purposes we wish to state that the spiritual institutions are being run on commercial lines. These trustees are solely responsible for this state of affairs. The religious reformer who without understanding the hidden secrets of Religion wants to indiscriminately tamper with time-honoured traditions is as much guilty as the other two. (turning to Nachiketas) Nachiketas, the considerations which

you brought to our notice have however altered our perspective and we are inclined to take a considerate view of the sins of these persons. It is indeed the lack of Satsang (Company of pious souls) that is responsible for many a good natured individual going astray. Instead of condemning all these to a life of medicancy, we take a lenient view and let them return to their former station in life. (Pause)

Chitrugupta : My Lord, may I submit there is no such precedent before... The sinners have never been allowed to get back with a mere warning!

Yama : (to Chitrugupta) We cannot help it! We are not sure about the survival of even the Hell! Nachiketas is no ordinary soul!

(Chitrugupta instructs the attendants. The man in ochre robe, the trustee and the religious reformer are led into the Court. Chitrugupta reads the relevant portions of Yama's Judgment)

*Man in
Ochre robe* : Oh Lord! Your mercy is boundless! You have given me a new life. I shall endeavour to lead a life of true renunciation.

Trustee : Oh Lord! You have opened my eyes! I will not swerve from the duty of a trustee.

Religious Reformer. : Great Lord! Thy kindness is laudable. I will not decry the rituals or the idol worship. These are the roots of religion and I will strengthen them among the people.

(The three are led out of the Court)

Yama : If we consider the contemporary standards as Nachiketas has urged us to do, there is no need to take too serious a view of such sins. Chitragupta, arrange for their early return to the earth.

(Court rises. Chitragupta bows to Yama. Lord Yama accompanied by Nachiketas leaves the Court.)

ACT IV

SCENE II

(Yama's Mansion. Yama is seen with Nachiketas and Sravana I)

Yama : (Turning to Sravana I) Nachiketas is pressing us for permission to return to the earth. Before he takes leave of us, let him be taken around to the various places of our domain.

Sravana I : Readily, my Lord.

Yama : (in soliloquy) We are delighted to see Nachiketas! His earnestness for the knowledge of Brahman is unparalleled.

May it be given to us to see such seekers of Truth often! Not only he single-mindedly sought instruction in Truth, but on obtaining it, he got wholly absorbed in it. He has completely understood both the Truth and the means to it. His presence in the earth will bring about a great spiritual awakening and perhaps in Hell also!

(Screen drops)

ACT IV

—

SCENE III

(Screen rises. Sravana I and Nachiketas are walking from Yama's Mansion towards the Hell.)

Nachiketas : What are these big buildings?

Sravana I : These are the residences.

Nachiketas : Of whom?

Sravana I : Of the ladies Heart Attack, Diabetes, Cancer, Ulcer...

Nachiketas : (Surprised) Shall we go and see them?

Sravana I : Those ladies are not to be seen here.

Nachiketas : Why?

Sravana I : They are ever so busy in the earth that they do not have time to visit their abodes.

Nachiketas : I do not quite understand...
SRAVANA I — Each of them has a long list of clients and they are not expected here for several decades more.

Nachiketas : What are those bigger buildings at the yonder?

Sravana I : These are the palaces of famine, Pestilence...

Nachiketas : Let us see at least them...

Sravana I : They will be always asleep and only when their victims are ready they must be aroused.

Nachiketas : What is that palace much bigger than the rest?

Sravana I : That is the palace of the Lord of War.

Nachiketas : Surely we must see him.

Sravana I : He has to constantly watch the situation in earth. His attention cannot suffer any interruption. Further he will be so raging that he will pounce on any person whom he sees.



ACT IV

SCENE IV

(Dark Pit in the Hell)

Hell

Superintendent: Pasahasta is right in his guess! It is the presence of this new mortal that is making conditions vastly unpredictable!

Hell

Attendant I : How?

Hell

Superintendent: In all the branches of the Hell, sinners despite beating, do not yell out.

Hell

Attendant I : That is something to be welcomed! Ever since we remember, we are hearing these cries. When are we going to be utterly free from them?

Hell

Superintendent: Who knows? I hear strange and stranger things!

Hell

Attendant I : What are they, Master?

Hell

Superintendent: The latest information is that the Lord Yama is not awarding any punishment for the sinners. They are allowed to return to the earth straight away.

Hell

Attendant I : What is it to us Master! At least the punishment given to the sinners

seems to have an end. But we stand eternally condemned to a life in Hell. Will there not be an end to the work in Hell?

(Nachiketas led by Sravana I enters. Superintendent rises from the seat.)

Sravana I : (To Hell Superintendent) Our Lord commanded me to take this honoured guest from the Earth to the places of interest in our domain. When I mentioned about this 'Dark Pit' he expressed his desire to see it. So we are here.

Hell

Superintendent: (Bows to Nachiketas) The Hell is honoured by your visit, Oh noble Sir. We rarely have an opportunity to see anyone except a sinner. Your arrival is like a rain of showers to the parched earth!

Nachiketas : (Aside) May it be so!
(to Sravana I) I seem to recognize some figure there in the pit. He is also intently looking at me!

Sravana I : Yes Sir, He is Pasahasta!

Nachiketas : Who is he?

Sravana I : He is the attendant at the Lord's Mansion, who threateningly approached you with the iron club to strike you down on arrival from the earth.

Nachiketas : Why is he here?

Sravana I : For having attempted to strike you down! No wrong can happen anywhere that goes unpunished...That is the Cosmic Law!

Nachiketas : But was he brought before the Court?

Sravana I : In the Lord's absence, the minister could award the punishment in some cases and so Pasahasta was immediately sent to the Dark Pit.

Nachiketas : How pitiable it is? Am I not responsible for his plight?

(Stands still and closes his eyes)

Pasahasta : (in soliloquy) Oh! There that wretch has come to hurl indignities on me even in the Hell! Ah! What misery, this mortal has caused to me! Is there justice in this domain of the Lord of Justice?

Sravana I : (to Nachiketas) Sir, Having seen this place shall we move on?

(No response from Nachiketas who remains deeply absorbed.)

Sravana I : (Aside) Is it wrong on my part to have brought him here?.....

(Nachiketas enters the Dark Pit.....The gruesome hell instantly turns into a pleasant woodland...There is mild breeze

and the sweet fragrance of the flowers spreads to every side....The denizens of the Hell including the Hell Superintendent and Hell Attendants turn cheerful....There is commotion and all including Pasahasta are rushing towards Nachiketas. Sravana is both perplexed and surprised.)

ACT IV

— SCENE V

(Mansion of Yama. Lord Yama is in the antechamber. Chitrugupta enters)

Chitrugupta : I have an urgent message, My Lord!

Yama : (Aside) What can it be, unless it concerns the visit of Nachiketas to Hell! (to Chitrugupta) Be quick to tell it.

Chitrugupta : The very foundation of our Kingdom has been uprooted!

Yama : What exactly has happened?

Chitrugupta : Sravana has taken Nachiketas to the Dark Pit in the Hell. After listening about the nature of life there, Nachiketas closed his eyes and sat in meditation. What is the result? The loathsome Hell has become an wonderland with pleasant groves and streams. All the persons including the Hell Superintendent

and Attendants are in a festive mood.
Never have such things happened before!
I do not know what further is going
to happen!

Yama : (in a quiet tone) Nachiketas is a
Brahmagnani. The moment he received
the instruction from us, he attained
complete vision of the Truth.....
(Brahma praptha virajo abhut)..... He
had been so earnestly aspiring for it.
Scriptures declare that whoever comes
in the range of vision of a Brahmagnani
stands purified at once. Nothing
unexpected has happened! You may
also now understand, Chitrageeta, why
I let off the sinners who were led
into the Court, during his presence.

(Thundering noise is heard from the outside by
Yama and Chitrageeta)

Chitrageeta : I hear the shouts of persons....

(Both come out of the Mansion).

Chitrageeta : It is a procession, my Lord!

(A long procession, with Pasahasta leading it, is
coming towards *Yama's* Mansion.....Nachiketas is
in the midst of the procession surrounded by
persons gratefully looking at him)

Pasahasta : Hail! Hail! Nachiketas!
Hail! Hail! The Redeemer of Hell!

(Other persons respond to the shout...Pasahasta and other persons continue to repeat the cry.... On the procession reaching Yama's abode, Nachiketas thanks the processionists and walks towards Yama. Yama's wife joins her husband.)

Nachiketas : (After prostrating to Yama and His wife) Oh my Preceptor! There is nothing worthy in all the three worlds which I can give to thee to express my gratitude to thee! This poor soul is permanently indebted to thee. Out of pure mercy, be pleased to bless me and give me leave to return to the earth to join my parents. I repeatedly prostrate before you, Oh Preceptor! (Turning towards Yama's wife) Mother, kindly bless this child. (turning towards Lady Attendants, Sravanas I & II, Vajradanta, Sonithaksha, Pasahasta and others) I am beholden to all of you for your extreme hospitality. (Pasahasta rushes towards Nachiketas and falls at his feet. Nachiketas lifts him up.)

Yama : Beloved Child Nachiketas! You will earn undying fame as a Brahmagnani. You have redeemed the Hell. Your further work is in the earth. May the vedic seers bless you!

(Yama and Chitrugupta lead Nachiketas to a Vimana (celestial airship) nearby. Nachiketas salutes Yama by joining his palms. The Vimana rises up in air)

ACT V

SCENE I

(The Hermitage of Gotama in the earth. While returning from his evening ablutions in Ganga, Sage Gotama is leading an old cow into the ashram.)

Vasumati : (Angrily) What is this shameless thing you are doing Oh Sage!

Gotama : Why? What have I done?

Vasumati : What else you do except thrusting a nail into an open wound?

Gotama : Oh lady! be clear. What have I done to deserve such a condemnation?

Vasumati : Not knowing that these cows are responsible for my ~~de~~ beloved son's separation from me, you have again started gathering these cows in our shelter. Need I describe to you what has happened before all our eyes? Because there were invalid cows in our ashram they had to be gifted away and when they were led into the Yagasala Nachiketas thought seriously of their defect. He offered himself as a gift to save the sacrifice from any flaw. You ^abecame angry and you know what the result was. Would all these things have happened if such cows were not maintained in our ashram?

Gotama : (quietly) The spirits of the cows which Gotama protected from danger will hover around Nachiketas and save him from every danger!

(Leads the cow to Gosala...returns the refrom and enters the prayer room in which the idol of Siva worshipped by the ancestors of the family is kept...Vasumati bewails her lot and enters into the ashram)

(Enter Agnivesa and Satyashada)

Agnivesa : When life is without charm even for us, how much more so would it be for Vasumati?

Satyashada : Doubtlessly so! Everything we see reminds us of only Nachiketas.

Agnivesa : Days have rolled by..... We do not know what has befallen the lot of Nachiketas.

Satyashada : His chosen Deity Gayatri will sustain him in every trial!

Agnivesa : It is our lot that is causing us concern. We cannot afford to leave the Kulapati and Vasumati in their present condition.

Satyashada : Yes! Of late Vasumati is losing her reserve of enduring power.

Agnivesa : But it is remarkable that there is no change whatsoever in the Sage's way of doing things. He is prompt as before in performing his ablutions and doing meditation.

Satyashada : The saintly soul which constantly beholds the Inner world of Self need scarcely take note of the external happenings!

Agnivesa : Surely the path of virtue is for the brave only!

Satyashada : May the power of his penance sustain us all!

ACT V

SCENE II

(Inside the Hermitage of Gotama. At the break of dawn the Kulapati returns from Ganga. Agnivesa and Satyashada tend the Holy Fire... The Kulapati sits before the Fire and is about to Commence the worship)

Kulapati : Are the offerings ready for the God of Fire? Shall we commence the worship?

Disciples : Everything is ready, Oh Sage!

(Vasumati enters, goes round the Holy Fire and the Sage three times, does obeisance to both)

Vasumati : Oh Sage, I have some exciting news to tell thee.

Kulapati : Do tell, my lady, I have yet not begun the worship.

(Vasumati's face shows joy and wonder... the disciples leave their work and gaze at her)

Vasumati : Oh Sage, after I spoke in angry tone to you last evening, you went into the prayer room. I waited outside with fruits and milk to give them to you,

but I do not know how long I remained awake. Possibly I fell into sleep soon. Next thing I am aware of was the vision I had of Siva coming out from the prayer room to my side I knelt before him and was about to cry out. He raised his hand in benediction and told me "No devotee of mine will perish. Gotama's son will shine as a great seer. When I take a human birth and spread the message of the Upanishad in the name of Sankara, I shall expound the story of Nachiketas as well. Be thou at peace, O Mother of Nachiketas, Your son will be back." After saying this Siva disappeared. Your footsteps, while starting for Ganga for the sake of morning ablutions roused me from sleep and it was then that I realised that I had dreamt! The image of Siva again and again rises before my mind. May His benediction come true! (Vasumati bows to Gotama)

Gotama : Let us pray. Let peace prevail everywhere!... (to disciples) Can we commence our worship?

Disciples : Yes, Sage!

(Disciples and the Sage chant Mantras—with every chant, the Sage pours ghee in the Holy Fire. The radiant faces of the Sage and the disciples shine in greater lustre when illumined by the leaping

flames... The chanting reaches a high pitch and the mantras are recited with pause... The Sage pours the final offering of ghee into the Fire and raises his hands in prayer.)

Vasumati : What has happened? The cows and calves have come out of the gosala and are running about meriily! Lo! Sage! Look near the entrance!

(A Vimana descends on the earth and a radiant figure comes out from it... The vehicle takes off)

Vasumati : My Lord, it is our son Nachiketas!

Agnivesa : Mother's dream has come true!

Satyashada : See how the calves are rushing towards him!

(Nachiketas runs down his hand on the calves near him, goes towards the Holy Fire, and as Vasumati stands by the side of Gotama, Nachiketas goes round the Holy Fire and the parents and prostrates before them)

Vasumati : My beloved child! Only yesterday I gave vent to my anger towards your father at our not trying to know anything about you!

Nachiketas : By the grace of Goddess Gayatri and by the blessings of my father and mother I am always untouched by any harm. The God Yama has been gracious to me. Oh Parents! You seem to have had much agony on my account. The worship of Holy Fire has just concluded. Do thou take some food and rest. I shall afterwards narrate thee all that happened to me.

(Screen drops.)

ACT V

— SCENE III

(Nachiketas, Agnivesa and Satyashada are in Gosala)

Nachiketas : So our Gosala has a fresh complement of cows and calves!

Agnivesa : This red one is the last to come. She came yesterday.

(Nachiketas goes near every cow and calf and caressingly runs his hand on each.)

Nachiketas : Friends! How were my parents during these days?

Agnivesa : Doubtlessly all right. But how could we find life cheerful when the soul of the ashram was not there?

Satyashada : Everything here reminded us only of you.

Agnivesa : How is it that all the cows and calves look healthy today? I am surprised!

Satyashada : This is the old red cow for bringing which Kulapati faced the indignation of the mother. It does not look so old at all now!

Nachiketas : Why did the mother become indignant?

Agnivesa : In mother's opinion the presence of old and decrepit cows in Yagasala during Viswajit Yaga was responsible for inducing you to offer yourself to be gifted away.

Satyashada : She therefore is not happy if such cows are again given shelter.

Nachiketas : Friends! These are really not the useless cows, we took them to be. These are really the virtues Modesty, Sacrifice, Renunciation, Truth, Love etc. Society has disregarded these virtues and rudely treated them. They have escaped into the woods as lame cows. Here again they have to save themselves from the tigers and hunters. They have found safty in the ashram of the compassionate Gotama.

Disciples : We are surprised! How do they look so healthy now?

Nachiketas : It is because the Reign of Dharma in the earth has begun! The Virtues – Modesty, Sacrifice, Renunciation, Truth and Love—will no longer be disrespected.....Ah! let us go back. Kulapati will be awaiting us!

(Screen drops.)

ACT V

— SCENE IV

(Frontyard of the Ashram of Gotama. Ascetics, Brahmanas, Brahmacharis from neighbouring abodes are sitting around Nachiketas.)

Vasumati : Do thou tell us, child, everything that happened since you left us?

Ascetic I : I request you Nachiketas! do tell us! All of us here are so eager to hear! (turning to others) Let there be no interruption.

Nachiketas : Salutations to all of you, great Ascetics and Brahmanas! The blessings of elders and parents and the Grace of Gayatri took me safely to the Abode of Mrityu. Yama was away to the Suryaloka Yama's wife and other ladies received me properly. I remained in the ante-chamber of his mansion until Yama arrived. He was highly pleased to see me. He taught me the secret of the

Yoga of Self-Knowledge—Adhyatma
Yoga upon my repeated request. He
took me to the Court where He
dispensed Justice. His attendants took
me to the various places of his domain.
While I was on such a visit to the Hell,
I was pained to see the sufferings of
the sinners. I contemplated upon the
Truth, my revered preceptor had taught
me before. The whole Hell turned
into a woodland and the sufferings of
sinners disappeared. All of them became
cheerful. Along with them I went to
the mansion of my Preceptor. I took
leave of them in a proper way and
am here to pay respects to my parents
and all of you.

Ascetic I : Who has ever heard of a mortal
going to the Abode of Death and
returning from it with the Secret of
Eternal Life!

All Ascetics : May the Gods bless you in every way!
May the wisdom you have brought
bring glory to the earth!

Brahmacharis : We bow to you Nachiketas! Bless
us and impart to us the wisdom.

(Brahmacharis surround Nachiketas. All leave
after a while for evening ablutions.)

1

1

1

1

✱

Gnanananda : Welcome to thee, Nachiketas.
(Gnanananda offers a seat to Nachiketas.
Both take their seats) Thou art the
very repository of auspiciousness!
Blessed is the man who ever sees you!
Who are we to bless you? Are the
Sage Gotama and Vasumati now happy?
The virtue of your mother and the
penance of your father have borne the
ripe fruit of Wisdom which you are.
The most precious Secret of Life which
even the celestials can only aspire for is
now your own. The Viswajit Yaga of
Gotama has yielded the desired fruit.
We have a wish, beloved Nachiketas!

Nachiketas : I am ready to fulfil, great preceptor!

Gnanananda : You have received instruction in the
highest wisdom and we long to hear
about the essence of the vedic teachings
from your lips.

Nachiketas : Great Preceptor! Thou knowest all.
Yet let me afford thee some innocent
pleasure by carrying out thy command
to the best of my understanding.

Gnanananda : Thou art surely a person well instructed
by mother, father and preceptor! Do
proceed with thy discourse.

Nachiketas : The inner essence of the human soul
is consciousness which is pure and all-
pervading. This can be realised by

knowing It to be one's Self and as ever existing. This is eternal and unchanging. It has to be known by restraining the talking faculty in the mind, by restraining the mind in the self, by restraining the self in the unmanifest and by negating the unmanifest in the Supreme. There is nothing else to be known. That is the Beyond. This cannot be realised unless instructed by a Preceptor, who has known the Truth not as other than the Self. This Truth again is not to be known through intellect nor learning nor exposition. He only who cleaves to it with his heart shall know it! Knowing it, one transcends all the sorrows of life and gains Eternal Beatitude.

Gnanananda : The subtle truths of Vedanta have been correctly expounded by you, beloved Nachiketas. (turning to disciples) Thou shouldst imbibe the true import of this discourse. Nachiketas has learnt from Yama the Brahma-Vidya and the Yoga to be pursued for Realisation of Brahman. He himself symbolises extreme dispassion. The message of Nachiketas has therefore a triple value for the seekers of liberation. May his example and His excellent exposition of the Truth inspire and guide you! Rise up, be alert, and attaining the wise ones realise the Supreme.

Nachiketas : Great Preceptor! I am too ignorant to
deserve such praise!

Gnanananda : (addressing all) Today is an auspicious
day. Instruction in the saving knowledge
obtained by Nachiketas from the God
of Justice will emancipate the whole
humanity. It is our wish that Nachiketas
should henceforth be known as
Brahmarishi. (Turns to Nachiketas and
places in his hands flowers and fruits—
The bells of the Ashram chime)

Disciples : All glory to Brahmarishi Nachiketas!

Nachiketas : All glory to Sadguru Gnanananda!

Disciples : All glory to Brahmarishi Nachiketas and
Sadguru Gnanananda!

(Nachiketas stands by the side of Gnanananda.
Ladies sing and wave *Harati* before them.)

All the Ladies

in chorus : Om Beatitude! Om Beatitude!
Blessed is the Wisdom that ushers
in the Bliss!

Om Beatitude! Om Beatitude!
Blessed is the Preceptor who
awakens us to life!

Om Beatitude! Om Beatitude!
Blessed is the God who acts
through the Preceptor!

Om Beatitude! Om Beatitude!

(Screen Drops)



1. The first part of the report is a general
introduction to the subject.

2. The second part of the report is a detailed
description of the methods used in the study.
3. The third part of the report is a discussion
of the results of the study.
4. The fourth part of the report is a conclusion
and a list of references.

5. The fifth part of the report is a summary
of the findings of the study.

6. The sixth part of the report is a list of
the names of the authors.

7. The seventh part of the report is a list of
the names of the institutions.

8. The eighth part of the report is a list of
the names of the sponsors.

9. The ninth part of the report is a list of
the names of the reviewers.

10. The tenth part of the report is a list of
the names of the publishers.

11. The eleventh part of the report is a list of
the names of the distributors.

12. The twelfth part of the report is a list of
the names of the retailers.

13. The thirteenth part of the report is a list of
the names of the wholesalers.

I

NOTES

SECTION I

The Katopanishad is so called because it forms part of the Kata sakha of Krishna Yajurveda. It contains six sections divided into two chapters of three section each.

The first eight Mantras cover the story portion viz. the performance of yaga by Gotama; offer of invalid cows as gift, the interruption of Nachiketas, the gift of Nachiketas to Yama the arrival of Nachiketas in Yama's abode and meeting with Yama. In the ninth mantra, Yama grants three boons to Nachiketas. The vital portion of the Upanishad is the instruction in the knowledge of the Supreme Self which Yama gives in response to the query of Nachiketas in the Mantra 20 of valli II.

The translation of the portion of the first nine mantras of the text is as follows:

Vajasravasa, desirous (of worldly welfare) gifted away all his possessions (at the Viswajit Sacrifice). He had a son, Nachiketas by name. (1) When the final gifts were being brought (for distribution among the priests), Nachiketas, the boy, was filled with faith, and he thought: (2) Unhappy, verily, are the worlds to which he goes, who gives such cows that have drunk (for the last time) their water, eaten their hay, given their milk and that would bring no offspring, (3) He said to his father: 'Father to whom wilt thou give me?' He repeated thus a second and a third time. (Then) the father replied (angrily) : 'Unto Death I give thee!' (4) (At this

II

Nachiketas thought within himself) : Of many (of his followers), I am the first; of many I am the middlemost (a middle disciple again), what work of Yama my father is going to accomplish by giving me unto him? (5) See how the ancients behaved, and watch also how others do now. Like corn the mortal ripens and falls and like corn he is born again. (6) (Nachiketas arrived at Yama's abode. After three days Yama, who was away, returned. Yama's wife told him) A Brahmana guest who enters a home like Fire. Householders make him tranquil by offerings. O Vaivasvata, do thou bring water (for his worship) (7) Hopes and expectations, the fruit of good associations, the merit of sweet and beneficial speech, the sacred and the good deeds, and all his children and cattle are destroyed, in the case of that ignorant man in whose house a Brahmana stays without meal. (8) (Yama told Nachiketas) O Brahmana, as thou, a venerable guest, hast dwelt in my house three nights without meal, choose therefore three boons for that. Obelance to thee, O Brahmana, May good happen to me!

It is significant that ^The concluding mantra of the Upanishad states that Nachiketas, after fully imbibing the Brahma Vidya and Yoga from Yama realised the Supreme Self and transcended the samsara.

The above summary has been given to correctly identify what portions of the drama have basis in the Upanishad.

The Katopanishad contains 118 mantras. Swami Vidyanaraya has elucidated the teachings of the Katopanishad in almost equal number of slokas in the eleventh chapter of his work called 'Anubhuti Prakasa' and the exposition in the scenes II to V of the Act III of the drama is based on Sri Vidyanaraya's elucidation.

III

SECTION II

ACT I

SCENE I

(Benediction - Invocation of Isa Upanishad. Meaning: That is Full. This is full. The Full comes out of the Full. Taking the Full from the Full, the Full itself remains. Om Peace Om Peace Om Peace.)

Line 11 : Markandeya ... The allusion is to the legendary tale told in the Mahabharatam in regard to the 16 year old Markandeya to save whom from the hands of Yama, the Lord of Death, Siva manifested Himself in the idol of Lingam devoutly worshipped by that Youth.

Line 12 : Satyavan-Savitri The reference is to the tale of Satyavan-Savitri narrated in the Mahabharatam. Savitri married Satyavan in spite of Narada's prediction that Satyavan's life was destined to end very early. In order to ward off the danger, Savitri secretly worshipped gods and performed austerities and on the day, Satyavan's life was destined to come to an end, accompanied him to the wood. While he was sleeping on her lap after routine work, his soul was being carried away by Yama. Savitri noticed Yama, followed him and through tactful and persuasive speech, obtained from Yama boons as a result of which Satyavan got back his life, Satyavan's father got back his lost kingdom and Savitri's father was blessed with several sons to continue the family line.

IV

ACT II

SCENE I

Line 15 : Dark Path... According to the Hindu doctrines, on the death of body the individual soul which has done meritorious deeds goes by either of the two paths – pitruyana also called as Dhuma marga and Devayana also called as Archiradi marga, It is believed that the souls going by the first path. ie. the Dark Path, come back to earth and are reborn after the exhaustion of their merits and that the souls going by the second path viz. the path of Light remain there till the Dissolution and are reborn in the next phase of creation.

ACT III

SCENE I

Lines 4, 5, 6 : Om Sahana... Invocation of Katopanishad
Meaning:

May He protect us both. May He nourish us both. May we work with great energy. May our study be illuminating. May we not dislike each other. Om peace, Om peace, Om Peace.



GLOSSARY

Adhyatma Yoga	— Mode of realising the Self.
Ahankara	— Ego
Apana	— A type of Prana, Breath
Ashram	— Hermitage
Asvamedha	— A kind of Sacrifice
Atman	— Self
Avidya	— Ignorance, Nescience
Brahmacharya	— Celibacy
Brahmagnani	— Knower of Brahman, the Absolute
Brahmaloka	— The Highest celestial sphere
Brahman	— The Supreme Self, the Absolute
Brahmanas	— Members of the priestly class
Brahmic Bliss	— Bliss that stems from realisation of the Absolute.
Charanas	— A type of celestials
Charvakas	— Members of the philosophical School which denies the existence of anything beyond the world of senses.
Dharma	— Cosmic Law which upholds the universe; Righteousness.
Gayatri	— Important vedic Deity worshipped specially by Brahmanas
Gosala	— Cow-shed
Guru	— Spiritual Preceptor
Hamsa	— Legendary bird.
Harati	— Waving of Red Water in a plate as an auspicious sign.

VI

Ishika	— Core, Stalk
Iswara	— Supreme God.
Jiva	— Individual Soul
Karma	— Duty ordained by Vedas; One's past act.
Kathaka seed	— A type of seed used to purify the muddy water in the pitcher.
Kulapati	— Reverential appellation for the head of the abode.
Lokasangraha	— World's welfare
Mantra	— Vedic chant with mystic significance
Maya	— Cosmic Illusory Power
Mrityu	— Death
Munja	— A type of grass.
Nachiketagni	— The kind of Worship of Fire named after Nachiketas.
OM	— Vedic Syllable with profound mystic significance
Paramahamsa	— The highest type of renunciates
Pitrloka	— The celestial world inhabited by ancestors
Prana	— The Breath.
Pranava	— Name of OM
Preyas	— Sense-pleasure
Purusha	— Supreme Soul
Pushya	— Name of a Constellation of Stars.
Rishis	— Sages
Samsara	— Transmigratory life
Sandya	— Worship of Sun at twilights
Sankara	— A prominent Advaitic philosopher stated to belong to 8th century AD
Sarathi	— Driver of the chariot.
Satsang	— Company of pious men

VII

Siddhas	— A type of celestials
Siva	— Supreme God in the aspect of Destruction.
Sravana	— Hearing the Vedic texts
Sreyas	— Eternal Good
Suryaloka	— World of the Sun.
Swagatham	— A respectful utterance used while receiving a visitor
Upanishad	— The chief portion of Vedas
Valtharani	— The River of Blood supposed to be existing in a portion of the Hell.
Valli	— Part
Vasantha Mandapam	— Cool resort.
Vayu	— Air.
Vedas	— The earliest Revelations of the Hindus
Vidhehamukti	— Liberation that follows the death of body.
Vidya	— Knowledge, Wisdom.
Vidyadharas	— A type of celestials
Vimana	— Airship
Vishnu	— Supreme God in the aspect of Protection
Viswajit	— A kind of Sacrifice
Yaga	— Vedic Sacrifice
Yagasala	— Place in which Sacrifices are performed.
Yama	— The Lord of Death
Yagnapathy	— The God adored in Yagas
Yoga	— The mode of union with the Supreme Being.
Yogis	— Those who pursue Yoga.



WITH COMPLIMENTS
FROM

SOUTHERN ASBESTOS CEMENT LIMITED

CHORDIA MANSION, III FLOOR

739, Anna Salai

MADRAS — 600002



Manufacturers of "RAMCO" Asbestos Cement
Roofing Sheets, Flat Sheets, Accessories,
Gutters, Fittings, etc.



REGISTERED OFFICE :

"Ramamandiram"
Rajapalaiyam.

FACTORIES :

Arkonam (Tamil Nadu)
Karur (Karnataka)